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To Whom It May Concern:

In over twenty five years of public service as Secretary of the Commonwealth of Virginia, Congressional Chief of Staff, Police Commissioner, Senior Policy Advisor on the US House Homeland Security Committee and leader of US democracy assistance efforts in war zones like Kosovo, Iraq and Afghanistan I have met thousands of dedicated people who place service above self. None are more hard working and committed to making positive change possible for the least among us than Chuck Rocha.

I first met Chuck in rural East Texas in 1996 where I spent the better part of a year working to help elect two new Members of Congress. Chuck was a labor organizer coming out of a small town in rural East Texas. On the surface, this Connecticut Yankee had little in common with the Hispanic laborer from Texas. And yet Chuck's transparent desire to fight on behalf of his friends in the tire factory, and workers like them across the nation commanded my respect and then friendship.

While working in Texas I was able to meet the grandparents who raised Chuck. I will always remember with great affection his "Mamaw and Papaw", their humble home and their great kindness. It was then that I met Chuck Rocha's son Charles. In addition to working full time and being a labor organizer, Chuck raised his son Charles as a single father. While in East Texas in Chuck's hometown I learned about how from the age of fifteen, he hauled hay and worked in a grocery store to help the family make ends meet. He has carried that work ethic and understanding of the struggles of everyday Americans with him ever since.

Unlike some people who head to Washington and are bedazzled by the bright lights of the big city, Chuck always remembered his roots in East Texas. He remains proud of his heritage, and has dedicated his professional career to fighting for the rights of working people who hail from towns like his. Since leaving his position with the Steelworkers, Chuck started a firm that advances the interests of workers. He is also a recognized leader supporting a rising generation of Latino leaders across the country who aspire to contribute to the American Dream. Chuck Rocha lives his values.

In my previous position as Secretary of the Commonwealth of Virginia, I was responsible for reviewing restoration of rights requests and pardons for the Governor of Virginia. As a Police Commissioner in my hometown of Stonington, Connecticut I take very seriously the rule of law. This is the first such letter I have written on behalf of anyone in these circumstances. I felt compelled to do so yes for reasons of respect and friendship, but more so in an effort to convey to you the great potential for continued positive contributions to society by Mr. Rocha. Chuck was devastated upon hearing of the indictment. He has paid a price each day since hearing of the news. It is my hope that he will not now be defeated.

If Chuck is allowed the ability to continue his life's mission, to work every moment of his career in support of American workers and advancing the prospects for a new generation of Latino Americans, I am confident that he will contribute to the general welfare and prosperity of society while living a fulfilling and rewarding life. If he is separated from this mission, it will result in a profound personal loss for Chuck, and a real and measurable loss for many for years to come.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I would be happy to speak with you at any time about this matter.

Sincerely,



Scott Bates